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ABSTRACT

The first 2 of the 11 publications reviewed in this annotated bibliography recommend the involvement of teachers in the evaluation of their colleagues. Subsequent reports include the following points: (1) those who are likely to benefit from an assessment are the competent instructors who know their subject well; (2) a discrepancy exists between state-of-the-art and actual teacher evaluation practices in the nation's 100 largest school districts; (3) effective teacher evaluation entails qualitative judgments; and (4) the two common flaws in teacher evaluation instruments are instructional undervaluing and vagueness. Additional publications reviewed describe evaluation strategies that incorporate assessment center exercises and extensive field observation, feature six diverse models aimed at evaluating teachers' ability to think and improve, propose a single system to encompass both formative and summative evaluations, and provide an overview of recent research on and discussion of teacher evaluation. (KM)

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Number 99, October 1989

The Best of ERIC presents annotations of ERIC literature on important topics in educational management.

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Teacher Evaluation

1 **Ashbaugh, Carl R., and Katherine L. Kasten.** "Should Teachers Be Involved in Teacher Appraisal?" *NASSP Bulletin* 71, 500 (September 1987): 50-53. EJ 359 331.

Ashbaugh and Kasten make a strong argument for involving teachers in the evaluation of their colleagues. The authors turn first to administrative theory to support their position. The zone-of-acceptance concept suggests that subordinates should participate in decisions that are important to them if they bring sufficient expertise to the process.

Not all teachers, however, are competent evaluators. Indeed, frustration often occurs when interested teachers with low assessment skills are included in the evaluation process.

The authors assert that such teachers should not necessarily be excluded from evaluating: "There are some situations in which perceived relevance is so pervasive and so strong that involvement must be ensured through the development of expertise." Teachers should be trained so that their skills in teacher evaluation equal their interest and stake in it.

Teachers should participate in all aspects of assessment, including summative judgments. After all, the authors conclude, "one classic distinction of a profession is that members monitor the performance of their peers."

2 **The Capital Area School Development Association and the Evaluation Consortium, School of Education, State University of New York at Albany; and the Greater Capital Region Teacher Center.** *A View from the Inside: Report of the Select Seminar on Teacher Evaluation.* Albany, New York: Authors, January 1986. 16 pages. ED 291 130.

In 1985 nine distinguished teachers and nine administrators from the Albany, New York, area met for five days to discuss teacher evaluation. This booklet summarizes their conclusions.

The participants agreed that teachers should have more control over evaluations. Districts should institute seminars on evaluation led by teachers and form cadres of teachers who regularly evaluate. They should be more concerned with teacher development than with teacher accountability. Peer assessments should be frequent, though the results of those reviews should not be part of a teacher's official record.

The conference participants also wished to extend evaluation beyond simple classroom observation. School districts must also be sensitive to the different needs of neophyte and experienced teachers. The former should have many evaluations and ample release time to observe and confer with more experienced teachers. Tenured instructors are best served by informal, self-generated assessments.

3 **Duke, Daniel L., and Richard J. Stiggins.** *Teacher Evaluation: Five Keys to Growth.* Washington, D.C.: American Association of School Administrators, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, and National Education Association, 1986. 56 pages. ED 275 069.

The authors conducted a case study of thirty teachers who have benefited from positive evaluations to identify salient aspects of effective teacher assessments.

They assert that the teacher is the most critical component to a successful evaluation. Those most likely to benefit from assessment are competent instructors who know their subject well. They are also open to suggestions, willing to change, and set high personal goals. The skilled supervisor must strive to create a safe climate for improvement for teachers of all types.

Effective evaluators earn teachers' respect by knowing the instructors' subject areas and students. Supervisors must model the traits they value. A principal who wants a staff open to criticism should invite feedback on her or his own work.

The sort of data used in an evaluation depends largely on its purpose. Assessments designed to measure performance against minimum criteria must be rigorously uniform and legally defensible. Evaluations intended to promote staff development should be much more flexible and descriptive, perhaps including grading practices, comments to and from students, and peer assessments. The most detailed and accurate evaluations can backfire, however, if supervisors do not convey them in a sensitive and respectful manner.

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4 **Ellett, Chad D., and JoAnne S. Garland.** "Teacher Evaluation Practices in Our Largest School Districts: Are They Measuring up to 'State-of-the-Art' Systems?" Unpublished paper, August 1986. 36 pages. ED 294 316.

Ellett and Garland present a study that reveals a distressing gap between state-of-the-art evaluation practices and actual teacher assessment in the nation's one hundred largest school districts.

Slightly more than one half of the eighty districts that responded to the authors' questionnaires use evaluation policies that are over five years old. They most frequently use evaluations to help or dismiss ineffective teachers. Indeed, few provide effective teachers with many opportunities for professional development.

The districts rely very heavily on supervisors for evaluation. Only 10 percent of them use teachers, compared to 100 percent that use principals and 93 percent that use assistant principals. Only two-thirds require more than two days of training in evaluation, and a substantial minority use neither video nor live observation.

Evaluation methods also tend to be very traditional. Virtually all the districts use direct observation. Only 31 percent use self-evaluations, 11 percent use peer ratings, and 4 percent use student ratings. Nontenured teachers usually receive two to three evaluations per year; tenured teachers, one to two. Nearly three-quarters use a standard document to evaluate. Most of the thirty such documents submitted are summative and categorical in nature and do not encourage formative or written assessments.

Only 8 percent of the respondents said that their evaluation practices were inadequate. The authors see little progress since a similar survey done in 1979. They recommend better communication between the school districts and the researchers, trainers, and others who have improved teacher evaluation during the past decade.

5 **Herrmann, Beth Ann.** "Effective Teacher Evaluation: A Quantitative and Qualitative Process." *NASSP Bulletin* 71, 503 (December 1987): 23-30. EJ 364 768.

Effective teacher evaluation entails qualitative judgments, not just recording and coding observable behaviors, argues Herrmann. She supports her thesis by presenting a case in which evaluation failed to predict teacher effectiveness.

The experiment featured two math teachers who received identical training in how to apply the direct explanation model of instruction to a small group of students having trouble with story problems. Evaluators awarded both teachers high quantitative scores. Yet postobservation interviews with the students revealed stark differences in how effectively the two teachers conveyed their material.

The more successful teacher began by specifically stating the lesson's goal. She used a particular illustration to exhibit the skill's usefulness, one that the students knew they would encounter only a few years later. The other teacher spoke of the lesson's relevance in much more general terms.

The effective teacher used concrete, direct questions and responses whereas the other tended to be vague and abstract. The former conceptualized each teaching strategy and conveyed the strategies in a way her students could understand. The latter used the same strategies in an inflexible step-by-step procedure. Despite these subtle but profound distinctions between the two approaches, the quantitative evaluation instrument could not detect the differences in the two teachers' effectiveness.

Effective evaluators, Herrmann concludes, must do more than passively code behavior. They must understand and recognize the nuances of effective teaching.

6 **Peterson, Donovan.** "Developing Teacher Evaluation Systems with Potential for Increasing Student Performance." *Educational Research Quarterly* 10, 2 (1985-86): 39-46. EJ 336 884.

Peterson detects two common flaws in teacher evaluation instruments: they undervalue instruction and they are vague. Such tools provide poor measures of teaching effectiveness.

A sampling of sixteen Florida school districts revealed that only 5 to 40 percent of the evaluation instruments' content focused on teaching. "In many of these districts," notes Peterson, "teacher background, appearance, interpersonal relations and care of materials and classroom accounted for well over half as much as did instruction in the teachers' evaluation." Yet teachers' classroom performance is second only to students' prior knowledge in predicting student performance.

The evaluation tools also suffered from imprecision. Many contained words like "organization" and "praise" without defining them. Praise, after all, is not always effective, and evaluators need to stipulate what sort of praise they observe.

Much care is required to create an effective evaluation instrument. Those who write them should be experienced teachers with strong conceptual skills. The instrument should be carefully tested by seeing if several skilled coders agree in their observations and by seeing if the instrument accurately predicts student achievement.

7 **Peterson, Kenneth D; Donna Dehle; and William Watkins.** "Evaluation That Accommodates Minority Teacher Contributions." *Urban Education* 23, 2 (July 1988): 133-49. EJ 378 333.

The authors argue a clear thesis: "Current teacher evaluation procedures do not distinguish contributions made to minority students, especially by minority teachers."

Conventional rating or checklist forms fail to address many of the qualities needed to teach minorities. The authors present an assessment system that has been much more effective: a multiple and varied evaluation system used by two Utah school districts. This system allows teachers to choose the criteria by which they will be evaluated. Materials might include student reports, parent surveys, teacher tests, documentation of professionalism, student achievement data, systematic observations, and administrator reports. The teachers inspect these data before submitting them to a panel of teachers, administrators, and parents who then decide if the applicant should be an associate teacher.

This varied evaluation system well serves teachers of minority students because it treats seriously the varied skills such teachers must have. For example, teachers can be assessed according to their incorporation of minority language and culture in their classrooms or by community participation.

8 **Shulman, Lee S.** "Assessment for Teaching: An Initiative for the Profession." *Phi Delta Kappan* 69, 1 (September 1987): 38-44. EJ 359 287.

The author, director of the Teacher Assessment Project, here describes several evaluation strategies that he is proposing to the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. He emphasizes the need to use a broad array of evidence to evaluate teachers.

Ideally, Shulman says, evaluations should incorporate exercises at an assessment center and extensive field observation. The centers would provide teaching simulations. A candidate might bring a videotape of a successful lesson, show it to examiners, and discuss how she or he formulated and executed it. The field observations would be supervised by a mentor who both evaluated and supported the candidate. The observations would generate a portfolio with material like lesson plans, student work with teacher comments, videotapes of teaching, observers' notes, and comments by the mentor teacher.

This eclectic style of evaluation has several advantages, says the author. It enables teachers to demonstrate their competence actively rather than by passively taking an exam. It suggests how diverse teaching is, and it conveys that teachers must be sensitive to a broad array of students and subjects. A flexible style of evaluation is most likely to foster the sort of flexibility a successful teacher must possess, particularly since many teacher education programs design curricula with an eye toward preparing their students for evaluation instruments.

The author advocates assessments that will, "in the very process of being implemented through supervised residencies in the schools, introduce new forms of mentorship, collaboration, and collegiality."

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9

Stanley, Sarah J., and W. James Popham, Eds. *Teacher Evaluation: Six Prescriptions for Success.* Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1988. 173 pages. ED 299 683.

This book features six diverse teacher assessment models. The first chapter treats evaluation as a means to improve teaching. Thomas L. McGreal recommends establishing instructional advisory groups composed of respected teachers and a board member and suggests that teachers and supervisors cooperatively set teachers' goals. He opposes rating scales because they lack accuracy, turn criteria into rules, and force often useless and destructive comparisons between teachers.

Madeline Hunter follows by describing an ambitious evaluators' training program followed by extensive staff evaluations. She argues that supervisors, not teachers, should evaluate because they are in the best position to assess teachers objectively, particularly in the long run.

W. James Popham, on the other hand, is concerned that one administrator not conduct both formative and summative evaluations. Formative evaluations are for helping teachers to improve, and teachers will not utilize them fully if the informal assessments are later used in summative judgments of the teacher. Formative evaluations should simply focus on "the extent to which pupils are prospering under a teacher's direction," not on the use of accepted instructional principles. Summative evaluations are more formal. Three trained and certified evaluators should pass judgment on a teacher's competence, and they should use many sources as evidence.

In chapter 4 Richard Manatt outlines a three-year plan for effective evaluation. He pays particular attention to planning. Schools must carefully establish performance standards, define what they mean by competence, and create an evaluation method free from bias.

Michael Scriven follows by proposing a duties-based approach to evaluation: establish what teachers are hired to do and discern whether they are doing it. Extensive remediation may be inappropriate because replacing incompetent teachers is often cheaper. In making negative assessments administrators should concentrate on identifying and documenting any weaknesses, not on discerning reasons for or solutions to the deficiencies.

The book concludes on a visionary note. Arthur L. Costa, Robert J. Garmston, and Linda Lambert assert that "if the work of teaching is thinking, then the evaluation of teaching is the evaluation of thinking." Teachers, then, should not simply be evaluated on what they know and do. Their ability to improve, change, and think must also be addressed. The authors would analyze and grade how teachers manifest these qualities in their schools and their profession, not just their classrooms.

10

Streifer, Phillip A. *Teacher Evaluation Systems: A Review of Critical Issues and the Current State of the Art.* Andover, Massachusetts: The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands, August 1987. 15 pages. ED 295 336.

Streifer proposes a single system to encompass both formative and summative evaluations. He is largely concerned, however, with ensuring that teachers meet well-defined minimum standards.

His program has four components. Establishing consistent policies and procedures is the critical first step. Teachers, after all, will not support an evaluation system unless they are convinced that it is uniform and fair. Districts should then research the lists of teaching criteria created by the nation's most progressive states and

districts when formulating their own set of teacher evaluation criteria.

Selecting appropriate performance standards is the third component. Streifer recommends using descriptor statements rather than rating scales. Observers judge if a teacher is accomplishing particular skills that are phrased in behavioral language. Under the category of discipline, for example, a teacher is judged on eight descriptors, such as "The teacher calls attention to desirable behaviors." Teachers must demonstrate competence in a predetermined number of these descriptors.

The system depends on adequate training, its fourth component. Principals must know what effective teaching consists of, be skilled classroom observers, and be able to effectively convey their insights to teachers. Streifer includes a self-assessment checklist so administrators can gauge the effectiveness of their current teacher-evaluation practices.

11 **Weber, James R.** *Teacher Evaluation as a Strategy for Improving Instruction: Synthesis of Literature.* Eugene, Oregon: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, 1987. (Prepared for North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.) 65 pages. ED 287 213.

Weber gives an overview of recent research on and discussion of teacher evaluation. He is, as his title implies, more concerned with formative than summative assessment.

Summative evaluations are the most common type because the law often requires them and because they are relatively simple and brief. But they have serious limitations. "Would a district want to promote a teacher to master status," asks Weber, "on the basis of only minimum standards?"

Peer evaluation tends to encourage instructional improvements because it can foster collegiality. Indeed, reciprocity and respect between instructor and evaluator are essential for productive assessment. Evaluators, then, must be sensitive enough to communicate in a fair, nonthreatening manner and knowledgeable enough to command teachers' respect. Districts could include more teachers in the evaluation process by giving them release time and by involving teacher organizations in designing and overseeing evaluation procedures.

A variety of sources should be utilized in evaluations. Written assessments that describe teachers' performance are more likely to change behavior than are fill-in-the-blank forms. Other sources often found to be helpful include nonsummative peer evaluations, student assessments of the classroom environment, and self-evaluations. The latter are perhaps best used before preobservation conferences, though ongoing self-analysis through tapes or student feedback can be very useful.

The feedback portion of the evaluation is critical, too. Evaluators should assume a positive tone, ask thoughtful questions, give plenty of time for responses, and let the teachers draw their own conclusions whenever possible.

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